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USAHA Johne's Highlights

Several Johne's related meetings took place during the 2007 USAHA meeting in Reno, NV including the Johne's Scientific Advisory Committee, the National Johne's Work Group (NJWG) and the USAHA Johne's Disease Committee. PowerPoint's from the presentations given during the NJWG meeting can be found on the NJWG section of this site. Committee actions will be posted on the USAHA

site, www.usaha.org. The following are major items of interest from the meetings:

Milk ELISA – The scientific Advisory committee determined that the milk ELISA test performed in a similar manner to the serum ELISA test and recommended that it be approved for use in the official program. A resolution supporting use of the test and a companion one that would allow approved DHIA technicians to pull milk sample for submission to approved DHIA labs was adopted by the Johne's committee and approved by the USAHA Directors. Eight DHIA labs are expected to run 100,000 samples during the coming year, so if implemented, it will make testing easily available to many more producers.

Demonstration and Program Herds – Preliminary data was presented from demonstration herds in Ohio, Texas and Wisconsin. Ohio reported they had found the use of "udder scrubs" a useful tool in their herds. All three herds are showing substantial reductions in clinical cases as well as ELISA and fecal culture positives. Texas reported on work from two large dairy herds. They found that implementation of suggested management practices is reducing the incidence of the disease in these herds. They reported that positive animals are removed from the herd 130 sooner than test negative animals and lifetime production is reduced by over 8,900 pounds. Preliminary results showed the reduction of positive cases resulted in saving of \$205 per positive animal in the herd. Wisconsin reported on three herds that have used vaccination as a part of their management plan. Vaccinated animals showed substantially less evidence of the disease in these herds than non-vaccinates. Minnesota reported that program herds in the state that follow the suggested management practices are effectively reducing the level of disease in the herd. Detailed results will be published shortly. Oregon and Washington have assessed results from over 400 risk assessments completed in the two states. Preliminary results are identifying management practices with the greatest impact on the disease. The NAHMS Dairy 2007 study includes Johne's information. Preliminary results found that education programs have been effective in raising producer awareness and knowledge of the disease, but it appears that the majority of the herds have the disease.

Producer Survey – Final arrangements are being made for a national survey of dairy producers relative to Johne's disease. The survey will assess barriers to and incentives for participation in the Johne's program as well as producer knowledge of the disease. Results will help to identify needed changes in the program. An on-line version of the survey will provide all producers with an opportunity for input.

Strategic Plan – The NJWG and the Johne's Committee recognized the need for updating of the current Johne's Strategic Plan that was adopted in 2004 and updated in 2005. Resolutions went forward and were adopted by USAHA supporting this activity. They called for strong producer input in development of the plans with support from USDA.

NJWG Reorganization – Retirements are generating a change of leadership for the NJWG. John Adams and Dr. Bob Whitlock will be stepping down as co-chairs of the NJWG. Dr. Scott Wells, University of Minnesota, Dr. Jamie Jonkers, NMPF, and Dr. Elizabeth Parker, NCBA, will become tri-chairs of the group beginning January 1, 2008.